

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 USSS-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19

IO-15 NEA-10 EUR-25 DRC-01 /165 W

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P R 141840Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3446

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USUN NEW YORK 586

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMSIXFLEET

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5935

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S URGENT MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT
NIXON

1. AFTERNOON OCT 14 I WAS CALLED URGENTLY TO PRESIDENT
BOURGUIBA'S PALACE IN MORNAG TO BE TOLD BY PRESIDENT THAT HE
HAS SENT URGENT MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT NIXON. BOURGUIBA STARTED
OUR MEETING BY ACKNOWLEDGING USG DENIAL THAT ANY U.S. MILITARY
AIRCRAFT OR PERSONNEL WERE INVOLVED IN MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES.
HE SAID HE WAS NEVERTHELESS CONCERNED AT REPORTS OF U.S.
SHIPMENTS OF ARMS TO ISRAEL AND WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS
"INDIRECT" AMERICAN HELP. RE LATTER, HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE
LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY BEING COLLECTED FOR ISRAEL FROM AMERICAN
JEWS AND AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS GOING TO FIGHT FOR ISRAEL.
ACCORDINGLY, HE HAD WRITTEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT NIXON WHICH
WAS BEING SENT THROUGH TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR EL GOULLI IN
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WASHINGTON.

2. BOURGQIBA'S LETTER ALLUDES TO "MASSIVE" U.S. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL AND EXPRESSES HOPE THAT USG CAN BE RESTRAINED. LETTER ALSO ALLUDES TO BOURGUIBA'S BELIEF THAT ARAB/ISRAELI PEACE SETTLEMENT MUST BE BASED ON 1947 PARTITION PLAN. IT REITERATES STRONG TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT FRIENDSHIP FOR USG.

3. BOURGUIBA SAID THAT U.S. ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL DURING HOSTILITIES WOULD AMONG OTHER THINGS OPEN HIM TO CRITICISM FOR PRESENCE OF AMERICAN ADMIRALS, WHO WOULD BE ATTENDING U.S. DESTROYER TRANSFER CEREMONY AT BIZERTE ON OCT 22.

4. I TOLD PRESIDENT THAT MY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DISCUSS DETAILS OF ITS ARMS RELATIONSHIPS WITH MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES AND ADDED THAT FRANKLY I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER USG CURRENTLY PROVIDING ARMS TO ISRAEL OR NOT. BUT I WAS SURE THAT ANY POSSIBLE U.S. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL COULD NOT RPT NOT BE CHARACTERIZED AS "MASSIVE". PRESIDENT NODDED HIS HEAD AND SAID THAT HIS SON, HABIB BOUGUIBA JR., HAD REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON THAT ANY U.S. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL WOULD ONLY BE PROPORTIONATE TO QUANTITIES SENT BY SOVIETS TO ARAB ARMIES ENGAGED IN HOSTILITIES.

5. I SAID I THOUGHT PRESIDENT WOULD BE KEENLY INTERESTED IN SEEING TEXT OF SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCT 12 AND NOTED THAT HIS SON HAD HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT HE READ IT. I SAID EMBASSY IN PROCESS OF COMPLETING TRANSLATION, WHICH WE WERE SENDING HIM, BUT MEANWHILE I WISHED TO READ HIM EXCERPS (WHICH I DID). HE LISTENED WITH GREAT INTEREST.

6. I UNDERLINED, IN CONSONANCE WITH SECRETARY'S REMARKS, OUR INTEREST IN THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND IN MOVING AHEAD TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT. I THOUGHT IT NOT RPT NO IMPOSSIBLE THAT SITUATION MIGHT OFFER US A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. PRESIDENT SAID HE CERTAINLY WISHED THIS WOULD BE THE CASE BUT HE CONTINUED TO BE PESSIMISTIC IN LIGHT OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE. EVEN IF WAR GOES ON FOR MANY MORE WEEKS, ISRAELIS WILL ULTIMATELY WIN AND PROBABLY EXTEND THEIR DOMINATION BEYOND 1967 CEASEFIRE LINES.

7. I NOTED PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE TO TRANSFER CERMONY ON
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OCT 22, WHEN DESTROYER ESCORT RADAR BOUGHT BY TUNISIANS WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT. AS HE INDICATED, U.S. ADMIRALS (ACTUALLY TWO) WOULD BE PRESENT. WOULD PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA PREFER TO ELIMINATE CEREMONY CONNECTED WITH TRANSFER AND LOWER AMERICAN PROFILE? PRESIDENT STATED FIRMLY THAT HE DESIRED NO CHANGE IN PLANS. CEREMONY SHOULD PROCEED AS ARRANGED. TUNISIA CONTINUES TO ESTEEM ITS STRONG FRIENDSHIP WITH U.S.

8. ON MY DEPARTURE, PRESIDENT AGAIN STRESSED HIS ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT NIXON AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH U.S. HE POINTED TO BRIEFCASE CONTAINING MOONROCK AND SMALL TUNISIAN FLAG SITTING ON TABLE NEAR HIS DESK AND SAID HE CONTINUED TO BE TOUCHED BY THIS GIFT FROM PRESIDENT NIXON. HE ALSO SAID HE WAS PLEASED THAT HIS SON HAD HAD AN HOUR'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY OVER WEEKEND.

9. AS I LEFT PALACE, I WAS INTERVIEWED BY REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIAN PRESS AGENCY, TAP. I TOOK THIS OCCASION TO ECHO AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY'S REMARKS AT PRESS BRIEFING OCT 13 VIGOROUSLY DENYING USG INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES (STATE 203641). SEELYE

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